

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A video gaming machine, comprising:
  - a housing having a display device for displaying a plurality of game
  - 5 elements in a grid having a plurality of cells defined by rows and columns;
  - a memory device for storing a pay-table; and,
  - a game controller coupled to the display device and the memory
  - device, the game controller being adapted to randomly select the game elements to be
  - displayed in the display device, the selected game elements being selected from a set
  - 10 of possible game elements, and to determine an outcome based on the displayed game
  - elements, a pay-table, and predetermined paylines,
  - wherein the set of possible game elements includes a bonus element,
  - and wherein the game controller is adapted to identify the presence of the bonus
  - element in one of the cells of at least one column and to modify all of the symbols
  - 15 within the column to wild if a wild character in any one cells of the column would
  - modify the outcome.
2. A video gaming machine, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the game
- controller is adapted to display an animation of an enemy breathing fire on the bonus
- 20 element, changing the symbols in the column to fire to symbolize the changing of the
- symbols to wild characters.

3. A video gaming machine, as set forth in claim 1, wherein the bonus element is a jewel.

4. A method for playing a video gaming machine, including the steps of:  
randomly selecting a plurality of game elements, the selected game  
5 elements being selected from a set of possible game elements, the set of possible  
game elements includes a bonus element;

displaying the plurality of game elements on a display device in a grid  
having a plurality of cells defined by rows and columns;

determining an outcome based on the displayed game elements, a pay-  
10 table, and predetermined paylines;

identifying the presence of the bonus element in one of the cells of a  
column; and,

modifying all of the symbols within the column to wild if a wild  
character in any one cells of the column would modify the outcome.

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5. A video gaming machine for play by a player, comprising:  
a housing having a display device for displaying a plurality of game elements in a grid having a plurality of cells defined by rows and columns;  
a memory device for storing a pay-table; and,  
5 a game controller coupled to the display device and the memory device, the game controller being adapted to randomly select the game elements to be displayed in the display device, the selected game elements being selected from a set of possible game elements, and to determine an outcome based on the displayed game elements, a pay-table, and predetermined paylines, the game controller being adapted  
10 to activate a bonus game in response to detecting a triggering event, the bonus game being depicted as a fight based between a hero and an enemy, wherein the player chooses a weapon from three weapons and the outcome of the bonus game is determined as a function of the chosen weapon.
6. A video gaming machine, as set forth in claim 5, wherein the three  
15 weapons are a sword, a bow and arrow, and a magic ring.
7. A video gaming machine, as set forth in claim 6, wherein the game controller is adapted to randomly select an enemy attack from three enemy attacks, wherein the outcome of the bonus game is determined as a function of the chosen weapon, the chosen enemy attack, and a set of predetermined rules.
- 20 8. A video gaming machine, as set forth in claim 7, wherein the three enemy attacks are attack from the air, attack from the ground, and a magic tornado attack.

9. A video gaming machine, as set forth in claim 8, wherein the set of predetermined rules includes three outcomes: hero wins, hero loses, and tie.

10. A video gaming machine, as set forth in claim 9, wherein the enemy and the hero each have three lives.

5 11. A video gaming machine, as set forth in claim 10, wherein the enemy loses a life if the hero wins, the hero loses a life if the hero loses, and the hero and the enemy both lose a life if there is a tie.

12. A video gaming machine, as set forth in claim 11, wherein the player wins the bonus game unless the player reaches zero lives before the enemy.

10 13. A video gaming machine, as set forth in claim 12, wherein the game controller is adapted to determine a bonus payout if the player wins and to distribute the bonus payout to the player.

14. A video gaming machine, as set forth 6, wherein the game controller is adapted to display an animation of the fight between the hero and the enemy on the  
15 display device.

15. A method for operating a video gaming machine for play by a player, including the steps of:

randomly selecting a plurality game elements from a set of possible game elements;

5 displaying the plurality of game elements in a grid having a plurality of cells defined by rows and columns;

determining an outcome based on the displayed game elements, a payable, and predetermined paylines;

activating a bonus game in response to detecting a triggering event, the bonus game being depicted as a fight based between a hero and an enemy;

10 allowing the player to choose a weapon from three weapons; and, determining an outcome of the bonus game as a function of the chosen weapon.

16. A method, as set forth in claim 15, wherein the three weapons are a sword, a bow and arrow, and a magic ring.

17. A method, as set forth in claim 16, including the step of randomly selecting an enemy attack from three enemy attacks, wherein the outcome of the bonus game is determined as a function of the chosen weapon, the chosen enemy attack, and a set of predetermined rules.

20 18. A method, as set forth in claim 17, wherein the three enemy attacks are attack from the air, attack from the ground, and a magic tornado attack.

19. A method, as set forth in claim 18, wherein the set of predetermined rules includes three outcomes: hero wins, hero loses, and tie.

20. A method, as set forth in claim 19, wherein the enemy and the hero each have three lives.

5 21. A method, as set forth in claim 20, wherein the enemy loses a life if the hero wins, the hero loses a life if the hero loses, and the hero and the enemy both lose a life if there is a tie.

22. A method, as set forth in claim 21, wherein the player wins the bonus game unless the player reaches zero lives before the enemy.

10 23. A method, as set forth in claim 22, including the steps of:  
determining a bonus payout if the player wins; and,  
distributing the bonus payout to the player.

24. A method, as set forth in claim 15, including the step of providing an animation of the fight between the hero and the enemy.

25. A video gaming machine for play by a player, comprising:
- a housing having a display device for displaying a plurality of game elements in a grid having a plurality of cells defined by rows and columns;
  - a memory device for storing a pay-table; and,
- 5 a game controller coupled to the display device and the memory device, the game controller being adapted to randomly select the game elements to be displayed in the display device, the selected game elements being selected from a set of possible game elements, and to determine an outcome based on the displayed game elements, a pay-table, and predetermined paylines, the game controller being adapted
- 10 to activate a bonus game in response to detecting a triggering event, wherein the bonus game is depicted as a contest between the gaming machine and the player, wherein the player chooses a player item from three possible player items in the bonus game and the outcome of the bonus game is determined as a function of the chosen player item.
- 15 26. A video gaming machine, as set forth in claim 25, wherein the game controller is adapted to randomly select a game item from three computer items in the bonus game, wherein the outcome of the bonus game is determined as a function of the chosen player item, the chosen game item, and a set of predetermined rules.
27. A video gaming machine, as set forth in claim 26, wherein the set of
- 20 predetermined rules includes three outcomes: player wins, player loses, and tie.
28. A video gaming machine, as set forth in claim 27, wherein the gaming machine and the player each have three lives.

29. A video gaming machine, as set forth in claim 28, wherein the gaming machine loses a life if the player wins, the player loses a life if the player loses, and the layer and the gaming machine both lose a life if there is a tie.

30. A video gaming machine, as set forth in claim 29, wherein the player  
5 wins the bonus game unless the player reaches zero lives before the gaming machine.

31. A video gaming machine, as set forth in claim 30, wherein the game controller is adapted to determine a bonus payout if the player wins and to distribute the bonus payout to the player.

32. A video gaming machine, as set forth 25, wherein the game controller  
10 is adapted to display an animation of the contest between the gaming machine and the player on the display device.



33. A method for operating a video gaming machine for play by a player, including the steps of:

randomly selecting a plurality of game elements from a set of possible game elements;

5 displaying the plurality of game elements in a grid having a plurality of cells defined by rows and columns;

determining an outcome based on the displayed game elements, a paytable, and predetermined paylines;

activating a bonus game in response to detecting a triggering event, the  
10 bonus game being depicted as a contest between the player and the gaming machine;

allowing the player to choose a player item from three possible player items; and,

determining an outcome of the bonus game as a function of the chosen player item.

15 34. A method, as set forth in claim 33, including the step of randomly selecting a computer item from three possible computer items, wherein the outcome of the bonus game is determined as a function of the chosen player item, the chosen computer item, and a set of predetermined rules.

20 35. A method, as set forth in claim 34, wherein the set of predetermined rules includes three outcomes: player wins, player loses, and tie.

36. A method, as set forth in claim 19, wherein the player and the gaming machine each have three lives.

H&H: 60,518-009

37. A method, as set forth in claim 20, wherein the gaming machine loses a life if the player wins, the player loses a life if the player loses, and the player and the gaming machine both lose a life if there is a tie.

38. A method, as set forth in claim 21, wherein the player wins the bonus  
5 game unless the player reaches zero lives before the gaming machine.

39. A method, as set forth in claim 22, including the steps of:  
determining a bonus payout if the player wins; and,  
distributing the bonus payout to the player.

40. A method, as set forth in claim 15, including the step of providing an  
10 animation of the contest between the player and the gaming machine.

41. A computer program product for playing a video gaming machine, the computer program product comprising a computer usable storage medium having computer readable program code means embodied in the medium, the computer readable program code means comprising:

5 computer readable program code means for randomly selecting a plurality of game elements, the selected game elements being selected from a set of possible game elements, the set of possible game elements includes a bonus element;

computer readable program code means for displaying the plurality of game elements on a display device in a grid having a plurality of cells defined by  
10 rows and columns;

computer readable program code means for determining an outcome based on the displayed game elements, a pay-table, and predetermined paylines;

computer readable program code means for identifying the presence of the bonus element in one of the cells of a column; and,

15 computer readable program code means for modifying all of the symbols within the column to wild if a wild character in any one cells of the column would modify the outcome.

42. A computer program product for playing a video gaming machine, the computer program product comprising a computer usable storage medium having computer readable program code means embodied in the medium, the computer readable program code means comprising:

5 computer readable program code means for randomly selecting a plurality of game elements from a set of possible game elements;

computer readable program code means for displaying the plurality of game elements in a grid having a plurality of cells defined by rows and columns;

10 computer readable program code means for determining an outcome based on the displayed game elements, a pay-table, and predetermined paylines; and,

computer readable program code means for activating a bonus game in response to detecting a triggering event, the bonus game being depicted as a contest between the player and the gaming machine.